

THE HARAPPA CULTURE AND THE WEST

Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series, No. XVI
STUDIES No. 6

Published under the auspices of the
Government of West Bengal

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SANSKRIT COLLEGE
CALCUTTA
1961

Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series

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BY

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with an Introduction by

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Published by
The Principal, Sanskrit College
1, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta-12

Reprinted from: Our Heritage, Vol. VII, Part I, 1959.

Price: Rs. 7.00

Printed by
S. N. Guha Ray at Sree Saraswaty Press Limited,
32 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road, Calcutta-9

FOREWORD

I visited Moscow as a delegate to the XXV International Congress of Orientalists in August last year. I had the good fortune then to meet a number of renowned scholars from different parts of the globe. Among others, I was introduced to a man of sharp features with penetrating eyes, which at once spoke of his attainments. He is Dr Heinz Mode, Professor of Oriental Archaeology, Halle University, East Germany. I came to know that he would be coming to India shortly. I did not lose any time to extend him an invitation to visit my institution, which is one of the ancient seats of Oriental Learning. Dr Mode, in response to my request, came to my College some time in November, 1960, and thereafter pretty frequently. He accepted the Honorary Fellowship of the College Seminar and delivered a learned discourse 'The Harappa Culture and the West' on February 27, 1961 which was published in *Our Heritage*, Volume VII, Part I. Realising the importance of the subject discussed by Dr Mode, the Board of Editors of the Publication Department of the College took the decision to reprint it as a monograph in the *Studies Series* of our Research Publications. I now place it before the scholars and those who are interested in the early history of Indian civilisation.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Professor Dr Heinz Mode for his co-operation with this ancient institution in the East. I feel it my duty also to record my appreciation for the members of the Department of Ancient Indian & World History of the College and also to Sri Nani Gopal Tarkatirtha, Assistant Editor, Publication Department for the interest they have shown in the publication of this monograph.

Sanskrit College,
Calcutta
September, 1961

Gaurinath Sastri

INTRODUCTION

I feel greatly honoured to be asked by my Principal, Dr Sastri, to write an introduction to the learned dissertation by one of the foremost archaeologists of the time, Dr Heinz Mode, who adorns the chair of Oriental Archaeology of the Halle University, East Germany. In spite of my diffidence, which is but natural, I accept the proposal, only because it is a matter of great privilege to be associated with the work of a scholar of the stature of Dr Mode, whose friendship I claim to enjoy. In introducing Dr Mode I would like to refer to the valuable contributions he has already made to the reconstruction of the history of the early civilisations. Dr Mode's interest in Indian Archaeology brought him over to this country and during his short stay in India he established intimate contacts with even the humblest worker in the field. By scholarship as well as by temperament Dr Mode can very well be regarded as possessing the qualities of a true *Brāhmaṇa*. It is quite in the fitness of things that Dr Mode has chosen the topic of the interrelation between the early Indian Civilisation and that of the Near East for his monograph.

Ever since the excavations in 1921 at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana district of Sind and Harappa in the Montgomery district of the West Punjab, now both in West Pakistan, archaeologists have been fascinated by the grandeur of the material remains of a highly developed urban culture. Evidences thus unearthed pushed back the beginnings of civilisation in India for a few millennia. It was at first called Mohenjo-daro, Indus valley or simply, Indus civilisation. Further excavations, however, reveal that the civilisation was not confined in the Indus valley alone but 'stretched from Rupar at the foot of the Simla Hills to Suktagen-dor near the shores of the Arabian Sea, a distance of 1000 miles . . . . Explorations during the past ten years have extended the reach of this vast civilisations to Ukhlina, 19 miles west of Meerut in the Jumna basin, and southwards into

Kathiawad (Rangpur, Lothal, Somenath, the Halar district), and beyond to the shore of the Gulf of Cambay near the estuaries of the Narbada and the Tapti. There five hundred miles south-east of Mohenjo-daro, at three sites, Mehgam and Talod and Bhogertarar, potsherds of the Indus civilisation were found in 1957, and for the present, the civilisation's southernmost limit' (R. E. M. Wheeler, Early India and Pakistan, Pp. 94-95; for Rupar excavations, Indian Archaeology, 1956-57, page 1, and for explorations in Kathiwad and Surat, Indian Archaeology, 1953-54 page 7; 1954-55 Pp. 1, 11-12; 1955-56 Pp. 6-8; 1956-57 Pp. 15-16; 1957-58, Pp. 12-13; Rao, S. R., The Excavation at Lothal, Lalit Kala, 1956-57, Nos. 3 & 4). It has been further observed by Wheeler that Juduirjo-daro, a mile west of the Quetta Road, 18 miles north of Jacobabad, was apparently early in the Indus series. It was in all likelihood one of the Indus towns, but never a true rival of either Mohenjo-daro or Harappa. The site has, however, not yet been excavated. The easternmost limit of the area of this civilisation is pushed back as far as the Ganga-Yamuna Valley by the finds of typically Harappan ware in 1959 at Alamgirpur, 50 kilometers to the north east of Delhi. (A. Ghosh, Indo Asian Culture, Delhi, 1959, P. 164).

By and large it is now clear that early appellations of the civilisation as Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Indus valley or simply, Indus are inadequate. The civilisation is, however, sometimes described as 'Harappa culture' to mean the culture which was first discovered at Harappa, and here the term 'Harappa' has no geographical connotation. It is, however, much better to describe it as early Indian civilisation, as is done by Professor Mode.

Archaeological explorations have widened the horizon of our knowledge of this early Indian civilisation, and consequently a large number of scholarly works has been written on the subject. Apart from the earlier monumental works of Sir John Marshall and Ernest Mackay, in recent years very many books have been published. Of these the following need prominent mention: (*i*) Richard, P. S. Starr, Indus valley Painted Pottery (Princeton University Press, 1941);

(*ii*) Heinz Mode, Indische Frühkulturen, Basel 1944; (*iii*) Stuart Piggott, Prehistoric India (Harmondsworth, 1950); (*iv*) R. E. M. Wheeler, Indus Valley Civilisation, Supplement to Cambridge History of India Vol I (Cambridge, 1952); (*v*) Bedrich Hrozny, Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete, (Prague 1953); (*vi*) F. Heras, Studies in the Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture (Bombay, 1953); (*vii*) D. H. Gordon, The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture, (Bombay, 1958); (*viii*) R. E. M. Wheeler, Early History of India and Pakistan (London, 1959); and (*ix*) Heinz Mode, Das Frühe Indien (Weimar, 1960).

Comparative archaeological studies of the Near Eastern and the early Indian civilisations show striking similarities in many respects. Further the emergence of civilisations in the Fertile Crescent and the Indus Valley falls more or less in the same period. The general contemporaneity and similarity of the civilisations have given rise to the question of their mutual correspondence. Professor Mode in his present dissertation has shown that there are three different possibilities. The early Indian civilisation might have been completely an exotic growth, a transplantation of the Sumerian culture; or, it may be that it was influenced by the Near East directly or indirectly by way of trade; or these might have been parallel and simultaneous developments.

Dr Mode believes that 'this early Indian culture was truly Indian in the sense that its achievements had a long life in later cultural developments of this country, especially in the religious and artistic sphere and also as far as its origins are concerned, it has proved in direct continuation to local predecessors'. Professor Mode accepts the view that direct trade relation existed between India and the Near East and through trade inter-cultural relations were also established between them. But he thinks, 'civilisation in West and East Asia rose on the background of agricultural communities spread mainly in the riverine plains of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris, the Indus and the Hoang-Ho... They show a certain cultural development which in many respects like the ceramic techniques, manufacture of seals

and amulets, of pearls and utensils, and in religious beliefs, for instance, acceptance of the fertility cults and worship of a Mother-goddess, is amazingly alike. This, of course, cannot be interpreted as due to ethical or racial homogeneity, but rather points to contacts and mutual exchange of experiences, based on the similarity of general economic and social conditions.'

Wheeler, on the other hand, holds the view that 'in each of the three lands, (Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India), so accessible to one another, the immensely complex idea of an evolved civilisation, should, within the narrow space of some five or six centuries, have emerged spontaneously and, without cross-reference, is too absurd to merit' (Ancient History, Pp. 104-6). The discovery of skulls showing Mediterranean and Alpine features is perhaps enough to show that a sizeable portion of the authors of the Indus Civilisation came from the Near East. The mode of using timbers in the construction of the State granary and some peripheral towers at Mohenjo-daro perhaps indicates that 'the master-builder concerned has been a foreigner . . . . Here, if anywhere we have a hint of direct intrusion from abroad' (Wheeler, *ibid.*, Pp. 104-6). It is also to be noted that had general similarity of socio-economic condition been responsible for the development of similar culture in India and the Near East, the most important points of similarity between them should have been in the political life. But while Sumerian city-States tended to constant nucleation, the early Indian civilisation appears to have been highly centralised and bureaucratic with its twin capitals, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Then, whereas political unification in Akkad in the Sargonic period led to the unity of the god-head, no such territorial or national pantheon arose in India. At least, so far, it cannot be established with the help of archaeology.

Dr Mode, following Professor S. N. Kramer, believes that Tilmun or Dilmun of the Ur inscriptions may be identical with India. It may, however, be pointed out that Dilmun is always described in the inscription as an intermediary whereas Meluhha was the country which produced ivory, wood, copper, etc. Direct trade between Meluhha and Ur

was also established later. Cannot Meluhha be taken as identical with any early Indian port like Lothal or Suktagendor ? The Old Testament stories of Hiram's ships at Ophir (=Sovīra=Sauvīra?) and of Indian merchandise at the court of Solomon would perhaps testify to that. Archaeology also confirms direct trade between India and the Near East in the first millennium B.C.

Professor Mode points out that typological similarity of the mother-goddess images of India and outside is no proof of their contemporaneity. It sounds very much like an axiom. But then he says that 'materials that point towards trade connections—incidentally help us date the remains of the early Indian civilisation as well, because the Near Eastern civilisations are relatively well-dated.'

The learned Professor, like most others, in the field, has sought to enlighten us on the problem of mutual borrowing mostly from the point of view of art-forms and art-motifs. Similar comparative studies in respect of social, economic and political growth have not as yet been sufficiently undertaken. These, of course, must await till by some good piece of fortune we can decipher the Indus seals, written in an unknown language and in an unknown script.

However I would take this opportunity to extend on behalf of the Department of Ancient Indian & World History, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, and on my own behalf sincere thanks to Professor Mode for his illuminating and highly interesting lecture which he delivered at the Seminar of the College in February 1961. The present monograph is the outcome of that learned lecture.

Department of
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Sanskrit College, Calcutta,
September 19, 1961.

Sisirkumar Mitra



THE HARAPPA CULTURE AND THE WEST

Recent archaeological research in India has much enriched the knowledge about the early Indian culture, which from earlier finds used to be called the Indus Valley Culture and later came to be known as the Harappa Culture. Now, we know that this culture was not limited to the Indus Valley and the Punjab, but rightly deserves to be described as the early Indian civilisation, for it extends over a vast area in the north-western part of India. It reaches Gujerat in the south and north of Delhi in the east (Fig. 1).

Until recently there were doubts as to the Indian character of this culture, and it has been variously designed as Sumero-Indian, Irano-Indian, etc. But by the common effort of Indian archaeologists and some foreign scholars, it can now be proved beyond doubt that this early Indian culture was truly Indian in the sense that its achievements had a long life in later cultural developments of this country, especially in the religious and artistic sphere, and also, as far as its origins are concerned, it has proved to be in direct continuation of its local predecessors. In what is today West Pakistan, recent excavations at Kot Diji, near the Indus, has supplied the proof for a prolonged local development up to

the period, which by its big cities, its literacy and superior civic architecture is rightly denominated as a full-fledged civilisation and city-State.

Yet there are definite connections in the archaeological materials found at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, as well as at Lothal with the materials discovered in the western part of Asia and the bordering Mediterranean countries. Comparison based on such archaeological materials varies from absolute identity, as for instance, in the case of some of the seals found in Southern Mesopotamia and again at Mohenjo Daro, up to the subjective interpretation of some similarities in art motifs, in the technical standard and in cultural institutions.

Such connections can theoretically be interpreted in three different ways: (1) as proof of foreign alignments and therefore of foreign origin; (2) as proof of contacts, direct or indirect, by way of trade; and (3) as proof of the general historical contemporaneity of early Indian and Near Eastern cultures.

Contact of diverse civilisations by trade is proved beyond doubt from the evidence of some identical archaeological materials, and there is also a good case for the parallelism of historical development in the third and early second millennium B.C. It is based on the comparative study of social institutions and cultural-technical achievements. But there is no proof whatsoever for a foreign origin of the early Indian civilisation, implying the right to call it non-Indian at least at the stage of Harappa city civilisation.

We shall therefore in our discussion limit ourselves to such observations which stand for contemporaneity and parallel historical development and further discuss the materials that point towards trade connections, and which, incidentally help us date the remains of the early Indian civilisation as well, because the Near Eastern civilisations are relatively well dated.

Danish excavations in the island of Bahrein have brought a wealth of new materials, of which the most significant

pieces are not yet published. These are seals, stamp seals of a new type, which may be considered of local origin. They bear affinities to the seal-engravings found on the cylinder seals from Southern Mesopotamia and show certain similarities with the seals known from the excavations in North West India as well. Now the island of Bahrein is situated in the Persian Gulf, not far from the Mesopotamian shore and from where cities like Uruk and Eridu were within easy reach. On the other hand, the island of Bahrein commands the shipping routes down the Persian Gulf, which lead along the coast of Persia right up to the mouth of the Indus. It has therefore been argued that in the third millennium B.C. Bahrein merchants were handling the trade between India and the Near East, at least as far as the sea-route was concerned.

According to the texts recovered in Mesopotamian excavations, there existed in the city of Ur a group of well-established merchants who financed a group of another, viz., Alik Dilmun. The latter traded between Ur and Dilmun. Dilmun is described as a place where many trading goods were to be found. The texts mention copper in ingots, copper used for tools, pearls and precious stones, lapis lazuli, ivory, utensils and combs worked from ivory, rare timber and many goods for female use, for instance, colour for the eyes.

Opinions are divided as to what the name Dilmun stands for. If it means the island of Bahrein, the goods mentioned could only have been traded from countries further abroad. Here the texts mention names like Makkan and Meluhha. Or, does Dilmun mean the place of origin of many of the goods, which might well have been India ? The latter opinion is advocated by the American Sumerologist S. N. Kramer, who recently lectured on the subject in Delhi. In that case, we need not speak any more of a Harappa civilisation, but would be able to speak of a Dilmun culture.

But it is better to be on one's guard and not stick to the facts which are not fully conclusive. Direct connections with

the early Indian civilisation, however, are proved beyond doubt. Some of the seals actually show the typically Indian designs, like the bull with lowered horns and the unicorn, and even inscriptions of the Indus type are found on some of the seals. A good number of these seals have also been found at Ur and are now in the British Museum. The date of these materials would lead us to the end of the third and the beginning of the second millennium B.C. (Figs. 2-3).

There are other materials available proving direct contact. Excavations in Tell Asmar, east of the Tigris, have revealed in a city layer, dated about 2400 B.C., seals, vases and minor finds definitely associated with materials from Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. It is held that Indian traders might have settled here. That would rather suggest an overland trade-route, as connections between Tell Asmar and the Iranian plateau are well known from other observations.

Yet there are indications, which permit us to date trade connections between India and Mesopotamia even earlier. There is the evidence of a unique figure on an early third millennium Mesopotamian cylinder seal, a bull with an elephant trunk, not seen on other Mesopotamian seals. But the same phantastic animal is common on Mohenjo Daro sealings and was even sculptured in the round (Figs. 4-5).

Again there is a group of vases, mostly cut from soft stone, a type which has been found at Kish, Lagash, Adab, Ur, Khafaji and Mari and may be roughly dated in the first half of the third millennium B.C. A fragment of this type with the same particular decoration was found at Mohenjo Daro (Fig. 6). Some others are in neighbouring Baluchistan and Persia. These vases seem to have been imitated in clay. Though Piggot has suggested that they were used for unguents, etc., and originated in Eastern Iran, it is more probable that the type derived from Mesopotamia, where the most perfect examples are found, and where the style is paralleled in other creations of the early dynastic period (Fig. 7).

These comparisons point to direct connections between

India and Western Asia roughly between 2800 and 1800 B.C. These one thousand years cover perhaps the flourishing of the early Indian civilisation.

As to the question, if Indians could have been the traders, there are many arguments in favour. From recent excavations at Lothal this city appears to have been a harbour, where sea-borne trade might have originated. There are besides several illustrations on seals and terracotta sherds, as well as terra-cotta figurines, depicting ships and bullock-drawn carts, the latter with their heavy spikeless wheels pointing to heavy and slow transport. In the early period of Mesopotamian history, it may be noted, very similar carts were used. For longer distances overland, goods must have been carried on animal-back (Figs. 8-12).

Some of these similarities between India and Western Asiatic countries in the third millennium B.C., for instance, the similar structures of wheels, need not be explained by trade connections, but rather by a common background of civilisational experiences. Civilisation in West and East Asia rose on the background of agricultural communities spread mainly in the riverine plains of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris, the Indus and the Hoang Ho, to name only some of the best-known rivers. The village-cultures, as we find them, spread in the fourth millennium B.C. over Syria, North Mesopotamia, the Iraninan plateau and in the East Iranian borderlands, including portions of India. They show a certain cultural development, which in many respects, like the ceramic techniques, manufacture of seals and amulets, of pearls and utensils, and in religious beliefs, for instance, acceptance of the fertility cults and worship of a Mother-goddess, is amazingly alike. This, of course, cannot be interpreted as due to ethical or racial homogeneity, but rather points to contacts and mutual exchange of experiences, based on the similarity of general economic and social conditions. Similarities are only one side of the picture we have of the cultures of these early agricultural communities of Asia. On the other side, there are many peculiarities and originalities of individual character, which defy any identification or

correlation. Parallelisms and differences have to be interpreted together as stadial contemporaneity and distinctly local cultural traits.

The early Indian civilisation is one which arose in this common background and it need not be stressed that the new development of cities, city-States and territorial States largely increased the independence of regional cultures. Yet there are even now, for instance, between Sumer and early India, similarities to be explained against the common background and a general similarity of social, economic and technical advance.

The speed of this advance of civilisation is markedly different in the different areas and thus we find in India, more than elsewhere, with the exception of Crete, strong relics of beliefs and habits of the earlier village culture.

Here I like to draw attention to the numerous terra-cotta images of a mother-goddess found at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, which have their nearest correspondents in the village cultures preceding the urban development. But whereas in India such relics are dominating the city culture, in the third millennium B.C., in Sumer such fertility cults were replaced by the worship of local gods, who developed into tutelary deities of the cities, and in the course of time united and formed a territorial pantheon, a heavenly corporation, corresponding to the unifying tendencies of territorial policies. Thus the comparison of the Indian Mother-goddess images has only typological but no chronological importance. Their presence in Mohenjo Daro and, say, at Tell Halaf in northern Syria, does not mean contemporaneity. For in that case we should have to date Mohenjo Daro by the Tell Halaf date, and that would be the fourth millennium B.C. Typologically some of the Quetta figurines rather compare well to the Syrian counterpart, and there also a similar date might be argued. But even here we cannot be certain and depend on other materials for a comparative chronology. On the other hand comparisons with the development at Crete, the island's culture being largely dependent on and inter-connected with the cultures of Western Asia,

point to close similarity and even contemporaneity, which need not be explained by direct contacts, but rather by a similar situation of the growth of civilisation in relative isolation, thus keeping distinct cultural traits of earlier periods.

There are many such points in common between India and Crete, which can best be explained in the way argued above. But as some of the more particular similarities are shared by some of the village cultures of Syria and the Iranian plateau, which did not develop so early into city civilisations, as for instance Sumer, we may even argue in favour of cultural inter-connections between a whole chain of such village cultures, extending from and connecting North-Western India with the bordering East, North and Western Iran, Northern Mesopotamia and Syria and the islands of Cyprus and Crete (Fig. 13). Some particular pearls found in Crete and recently examined, proved to be of exactly the same material as those found in the Indus valley. That definitely points to some faint traces of indirect contacts, which may be discovered in other respects as well.

As to the types of Mother-goddess images, we can state that the Mohenjo Daro type, of a dressed female, the breasts being exposed, wearing a high head-dress (Fig. 14) has its oldest correspondents in Syria and Crete, whereas in other parts of Western Asia, different types prevail. We may mention here only the nude mother-goddesses of Egypt (Fig. 15) and Sumer (Fig. 16) which continued in later Babylonia, and the abstract stylized, sometimes violin-shaped, type which we find in Northern Iran, North Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, in some of the Greek isles and on the Greek mainland. As the dressed female figurines of Hassuna, Jarmo and Tell Halaf, as well as of neolithic Crete, are amongst the oldest mother-goddess images known in Western Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean area, Harappan tradition seems to go back to much earlier periods, so far only testified in Western Asian materials (Figs. 17-23).

I want to point out just one fact, which is significant for the interpretation of some of the later Indian finds (Fig.

24). In the Maurya period, finds from different sites, include a small, completely nude female figure which once was interpreted as the Vedic Earth goddess. The nakedness of this goddess contrasts sharply with the Harappa figurines and connects it, on the other hand, with some of the later Western Asian materials, as we know that the naked goddess was favourite in Mesopotamia as also in the countries on the Mediterranean shore in the first millennium B.C. Thus a new tradition entered Indian soil with this type, which though not proved as Vedic, may have been derived from Western Asia.

Some of the marked associations of the Syrio-Cretan type of the mother-goddess are also found in the Indian materials. Thus, the goddess is associated with the dove as well as with the snake, especially in Crete, and her cult must have been closely connected with the worship of trees. Now all these traits can be found at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, and only recently a number of sherds showing snakes (Fig. 25) and trees have been excavated at Lothal. Most interesting is the type of a mother-goddess surrounded by doves, found on statues from Crete (Mycenae), Tepe Hissar and Mohenjo Daro (Figs. 26-28).

It is quite possible that the remarkable cult devotion to a nature-goddess associated with trees and animals had an effect on the early art as well. At least we find a marked tendency to depict what we would call landscapes in Syrio-Cretan and early Indian art (Fig. 29). Especially, some of the vase paintings betray this tendency, but it must always be borne in mind that larger paintings or pictures could have existed in these periods, which had not been conserved, as these were executed on easily perishable material. In Crete, in a later period, actual landscapes were painted on house-walls, but in India mere bricks of the buildings remain, nothing of the adornment of the walls has survived and thus we have the impression of a very utilitarian culture, where houses remained completely undecorated. This opinion of the excavators is surely wrong and does not agree with the artistic taste, shown in figure-sculpturing, seal-engravings and

in other minor arts, where the originals have been regained. We have to visualise that the early Indians were devoted painters as well, and that artistic tradition, later on so conclusive for Indian art, goes back to this early period.

A rich development of textile ornamentation is testified by some of the so-called repetition patterns found again on the Harappan painted pots. For instance, intersecting circles form a most important part of the motifs used (Fig. 30). Now, these repetition patterns are by their very nature bound to the flat surface of a wall much more than to the curved surface of pots, to textile ornamentation much more than to vase painting. And it is strange, again, that whereas such patterns are rare in most parts of Asia, they are found in the Tell Halaf culture of the fourth millennium B.C. in Syria (Fig. 32) and in Cretan art, where actually walls are decorated with them (Fig. 33). Nal, in the East Iranian borderlands of India, is one of the intermediate links between India and the West, as the small pots discovered there show a marked preference for this type of decoration (Fig. 31).

Recent excavations in the Indus valley, at Kot Diji, have proved that the intersecting circles were not an invention of the city culture of Harappan times, but were much older even in the same locality, as pots decorated with them were found in earlier strata (Fig. 34). Thus they form part of an older tradition, which is the common background for Indian, and the Syrio-Aegean culture.

One feature in common between these two culture groups has been pointed out long ago, the preference to bull cults, especially exemplified in the figuration of bull-grappling and bull-fighting scenes (Fig. 35). Whereas in Cretan art a more playful scenery is depicted, showing young people to sommersault over bulls (Fig. 36), the scenes depicted on some Indian seals are more serious and seem to relate to actual fighting.

Group dancing, showing groups of four or seven, depicted on finds from the Indus sites, is paralleled on many vase

paintings found in the village cultures of the Iranian plateau (Figs. 37-40).

Of ornamental forms used in Indian inlays in amulets and on seals and pots, some are shaped like kidney or heart. These have their closest parallels in Syria (Figs. 41-43). A strange figure of eight-shield on a Chanhu Daro seal (Fig. 44) also to be found on Mohenjo Daro and Jhukar sherds (Fig. 45) can be compared with many examples from Crete, where this motif was much favoured (Figs. 46-47). Crosses, simple and stepped ones, *swastikas*, and intricate band designs, mostly used as inlays or as stamp-seal designs in India, have their equivalents in the West in the Iranian, Syrian and Cretan materials (Figs. 48-53).

As we have already said, these comparisons go a far way, especially in their number, to prove a connection over great distances, which is not to be interpreted in chronological terms, but rather on the basis of common stock of beliefs and art-forms, which may originate in some or one of the oldest cultures referred to, most probably one of Syria or Western Iran. Of the art-forms, some of particular importance should be mentioned.

One of these art motifs found on the Indian seals is the triple group of a man holding two tigers by his outstretched arms (Fig. 54). The obvious significance of this group is the domination of wild animals by man, far more than an actual fight with tigers. Now this scene has been compared with that on Sumerian seals showing actual fights between nude and demon-like man and lions, associated in that country with a famous episode describing the deeds of a hero called Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu. Actually there is little connection between the Indian and the Sumerian subject-matter, and it would be wrong to believe that the story of Gilgamesh was also known in India. There is no fight depicted on Indian seals and the animals are tigers. Now the theme of the domination of wild animals by man, has also been depicted in Western Asian, Egyptian and Cretan art, and there the group is much closer to the Indian figuration (Figs. 55-56). Here composition and symbolism well agree

with each other, whereas the animals are chosen locally, the tiger obviously being the typical early Indian king of the beasts.

Typical of the Indian seals are animals with multiple heads, two or three (Fig. 57) which can be paralleled from Syrian and Cretan materials (Fig. 58). Again the combination of animals in a revolving circle is found on several Indus seals (Fig. 59) and is found already on the early North Mesopotamian ware from Samarra, where pots are painted with revolving animal and human patterns (Fig. 60). In the third millennium B.C. this motif is found in human form on Mesopotamian seals.

Another animal group of interest is the picture of a *gharial* or a bird holding a fish (Fig. 61). Until recently it has been known in its bird form only from Mesopotamian materials (Fig. 62). But at Lothal, a seal depicting the scene is found, and lately I have seen a Lothal vase, where a bird can be seen holding a fish (Fig. 63).

A hunting scene from a copper tabloid from Mohenjo Daro is interesting. The hunters face with bows and arrows an animal that has been struck already by arrows sticking in its body (Fig. 64). Now this scene has an almost exact parallel on a seal from Susa (Fig. 65), one from Crete (Fig. 66) and one from Megiddo in Palestine, and is later depicted in Assyrian art. Comparisons of this type would not amount to much if they stand alone, but added to the many comparable features already mentioned, they are of great interest.

It may be mentioned also, that the representation of monkeys is almost absent in South Mesopotamian art, but they are well represented in the Indian materials (Fig 67). Their natural modelling and liveliness correspond well to some monkey figures found in Crete (Fig. 68), whereas the typical Egyptian monkey was of a different type.

Towards the end of my lecture, I now like to discuss a few motifs of early Indian art, that seem to me of particular significance as art types as well as in subject-matter. The



one is the famous Mohenjo Daro seal of a god surrounded by animals compared to later Śiva Paśupati (Fig. 69), the other a Chanhu Daro seal showing a bull over a prostrate human body (Fig. 70). The seated god is found on other seals as well, most interestingly fashioned on a seal in the collection of de Clerq of unknown origin holding two giant snakes (Fig. 71). Note that besides this group, a second one is depicted, showing the familiar scene of the man dominating over two tigers, which we have stated to be definitely Indian. There are other motifs on this seal which relate it closely to the stratified materials from India. The god as dominator or protector of animals, in a similar frontal attitude, is found on a cult relief from Assur, feeding two goats, and on a relief from Minet el Beida, on the Syrian shore, a goddess of Cretan type is seen in the same attitude (Fig. 72). A sculptured slab from Karkemisch shows a kneeling man surrounded by animals, evidently a slightly changed repetition of our Indian prototype. The last example comes from a metal vase from Gundestrup and is supposed to represent Celtic art. Here again the Mohenjo Daro group is repeated. It may be noted that the Indian attitude of sitting with legs flattened under the body is rarely found in old West Asian art. I am aware only of one Sumerian sculpture from Khafaji (Fig. 73) which seems to show this Indian influence. But much later, this attitude has found entrance in Celtic art, thus supporting the evidence of the Gundestrup vessel.

The other group, to which I would like to give the caption 'The Beauty and the Beast' has been found on an Iranian stamp seal (Fig. 74), an ivory relief from Nimrud (Fig. 75). Again it is seen on a Cretan seal, on a plaque from Palestine. And the famous lion from Babylon as well as the Khajuraho lion group (Fig. 76) seems to depict the same subject.

Thus the original creation of designs on some of the Indus seals has had a great bearing on later Asian and European art devices. I would like to close this lecture by reminding you, that some of the sculptural types of early India, for instance, the figure of a spirited dancer, shown in

bronze and in stone (Figs. 77-78), had a great future not only in later Indian art, where the dancing Śiva of South Indian bronzes is a worthy witness, but also seems to have been exported to the Western world, as is proved by a bronze figure found not long ago near the shore of Southern Arabia (Fig. 79). The ivory figure from Pompeii (Fig. 80) though of somewhat different type, also testifies to the later Western connections, where India seems to have the giving part.

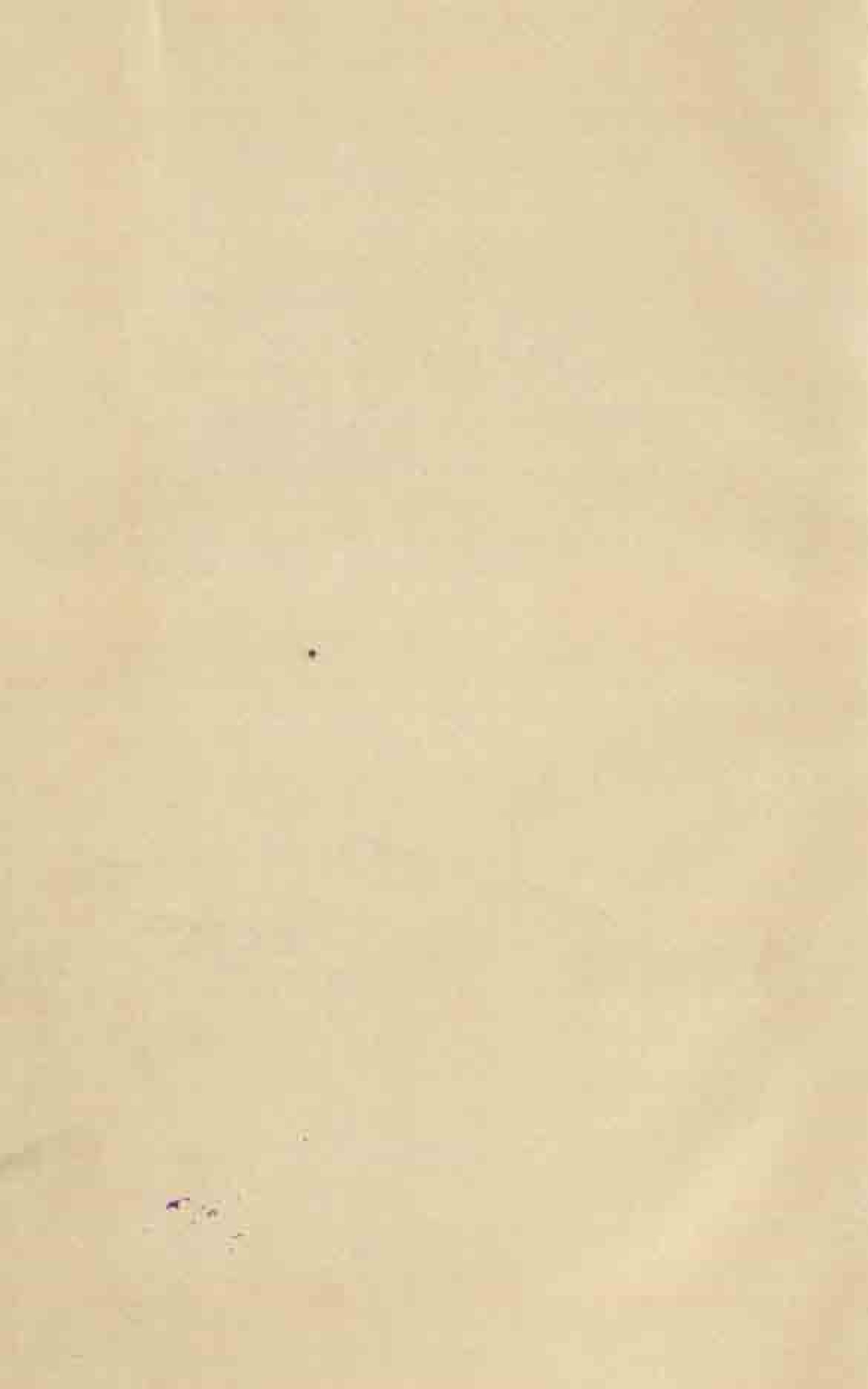
Thus our comparison of early Indian and Western Asian archaeological materials, on the one hand shows the stadial conformity against a common background based on the cultural development of agricultural communities spread all over Western Asia, and on the other proves the originality and creativeness of Indian art even in its earliest period, i.e., the third millennium B.C.

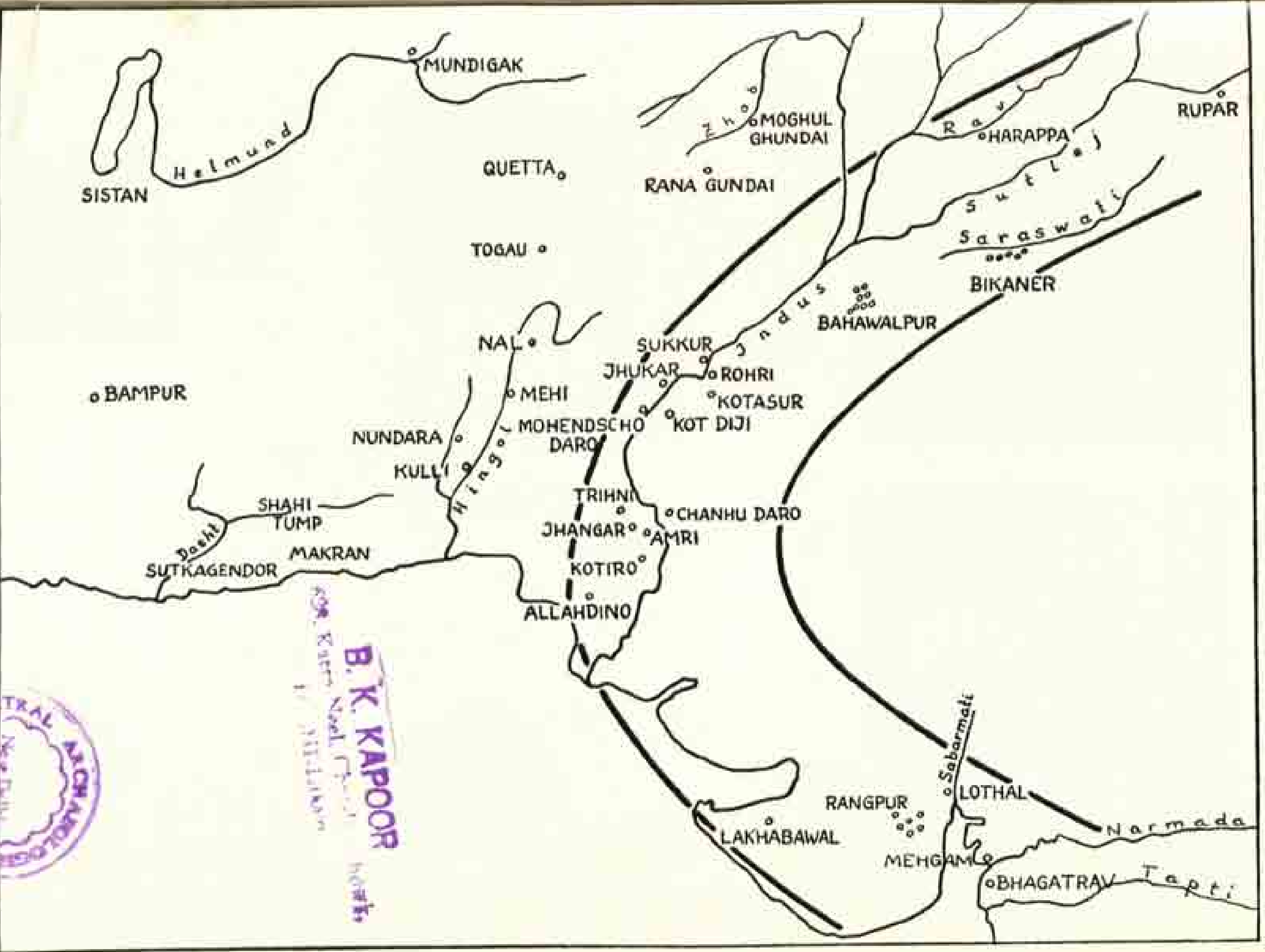
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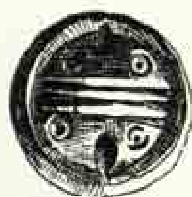
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Harappa and neighbouring cultures





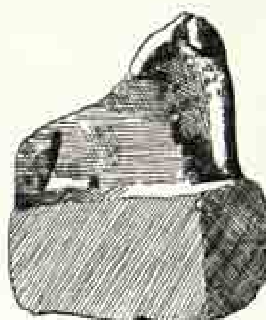
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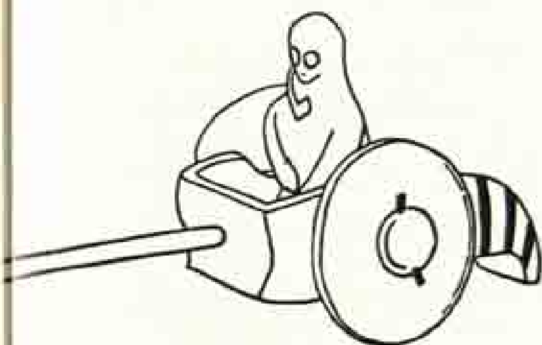
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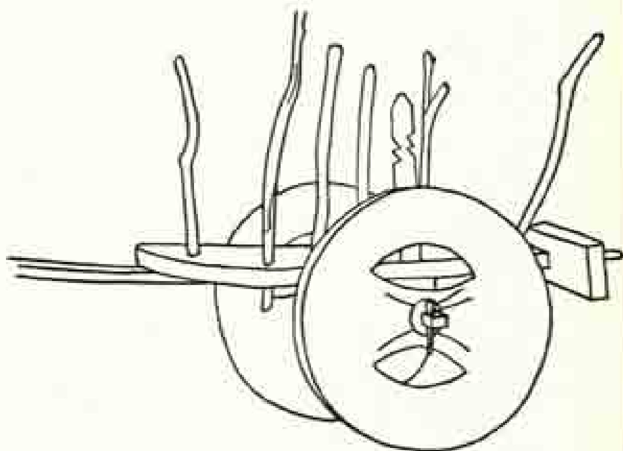
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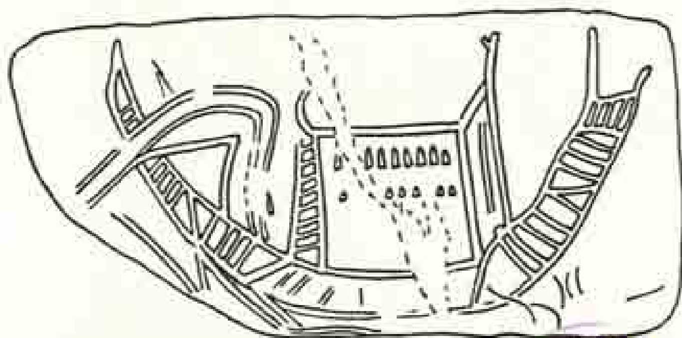
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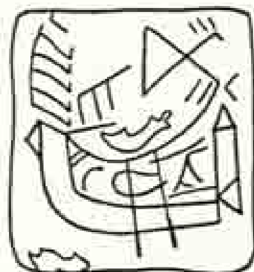
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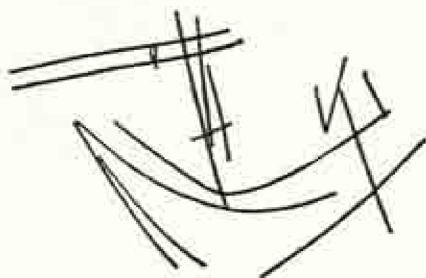


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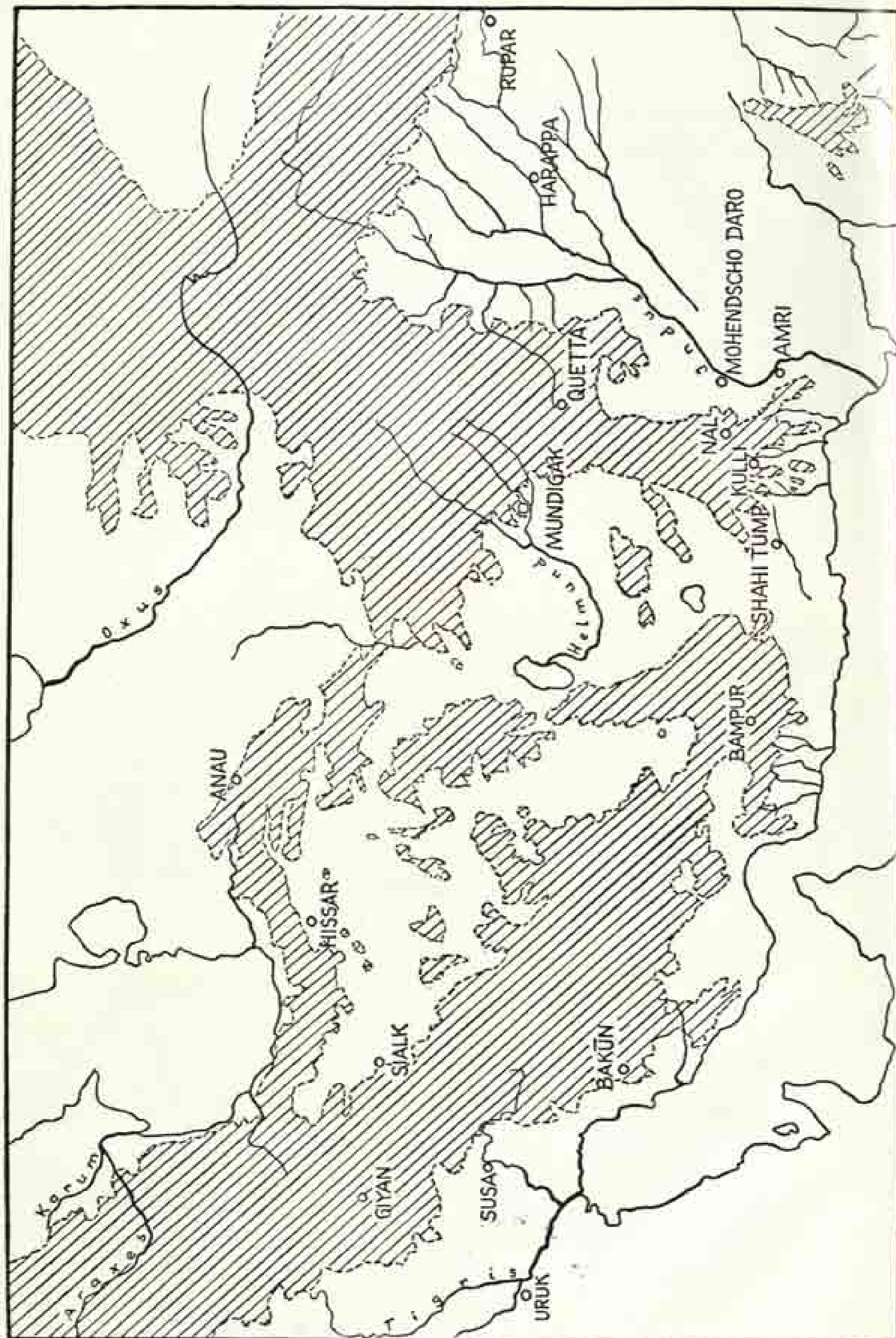
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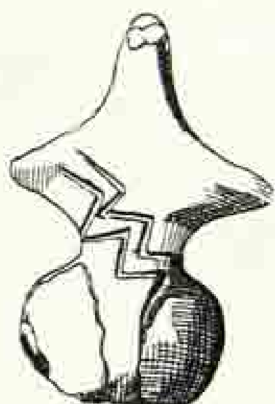


Regions of ancient Indian & Iranian cultures

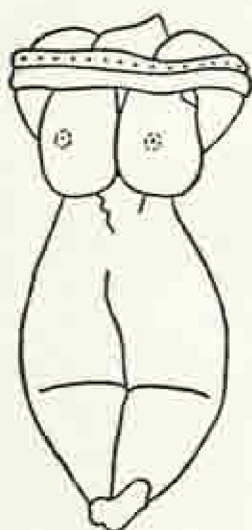


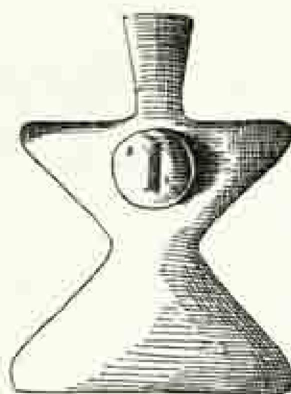

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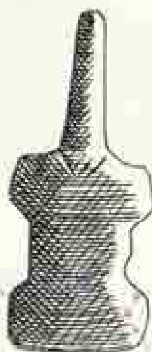

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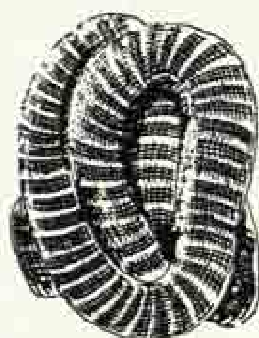

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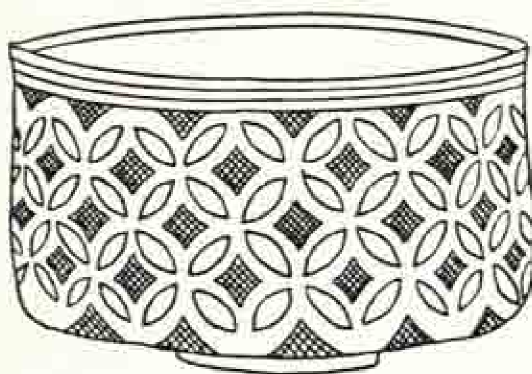
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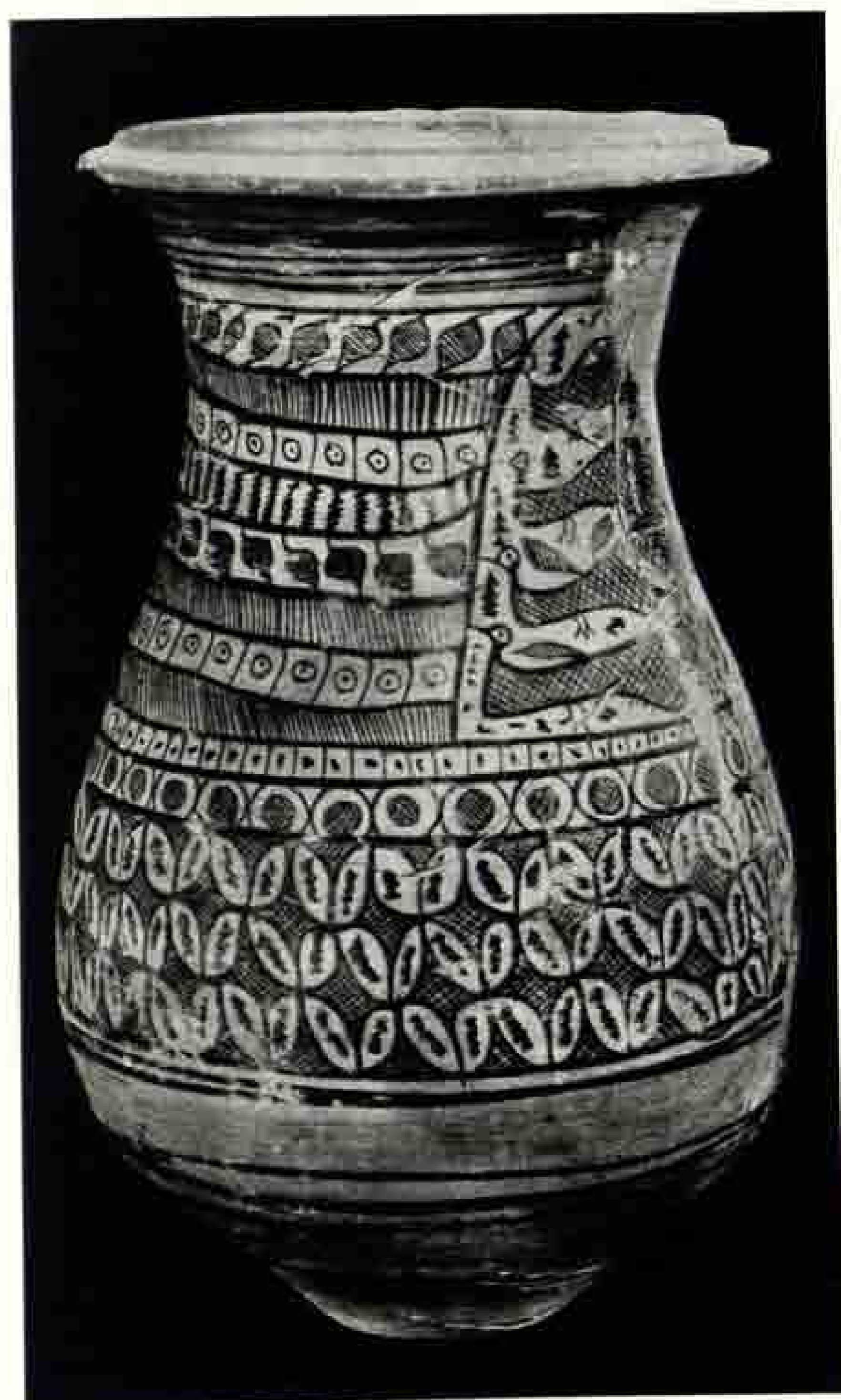
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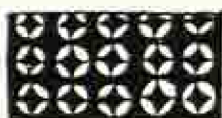


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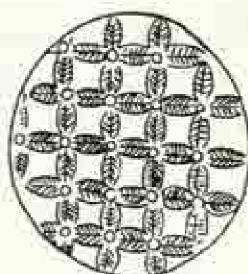


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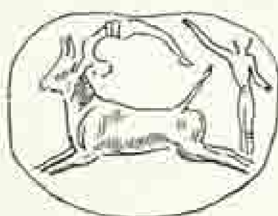
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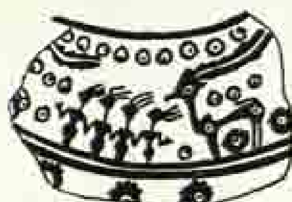
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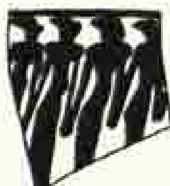
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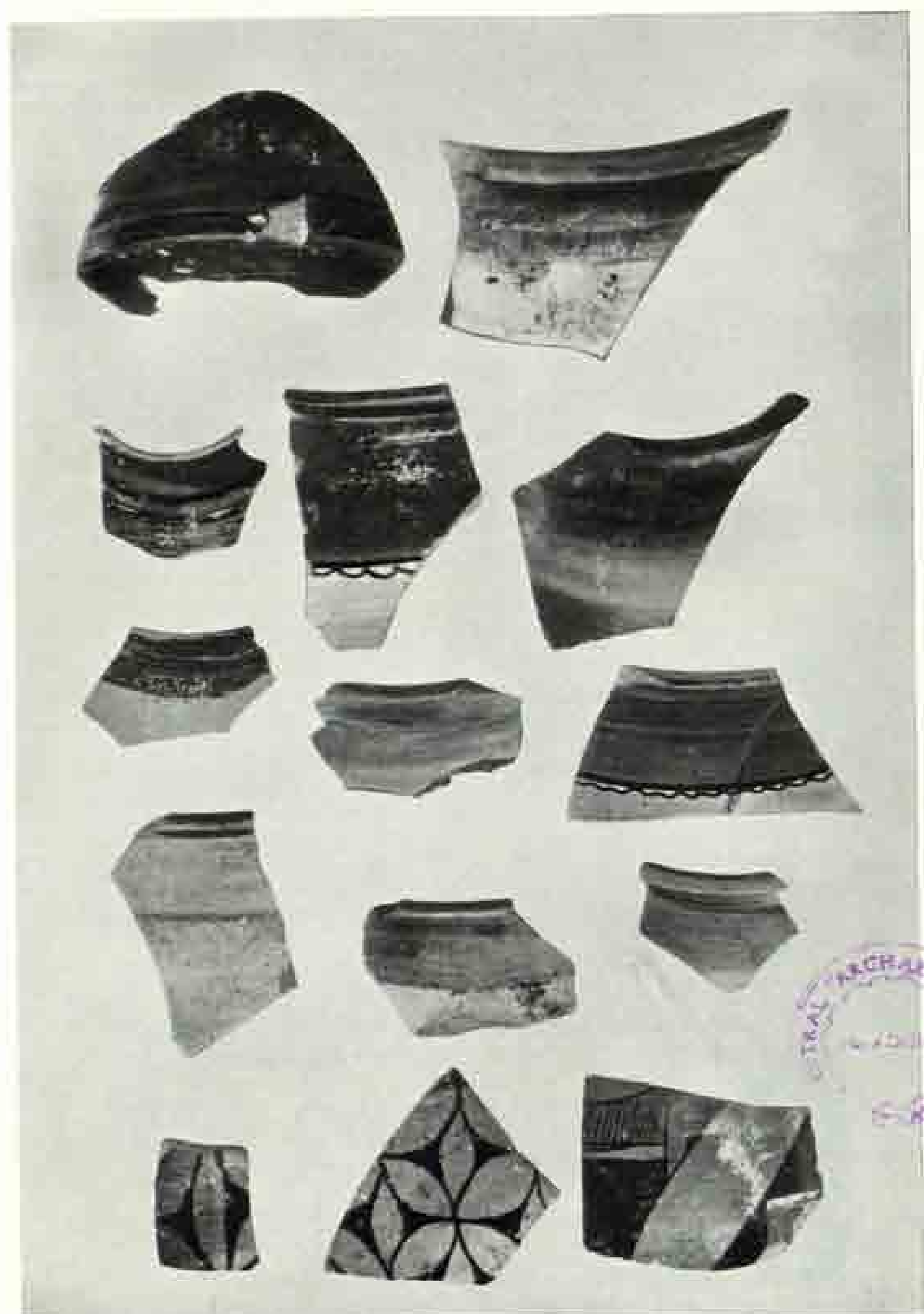
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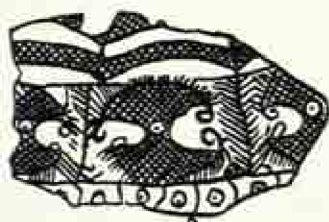
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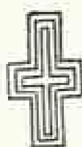



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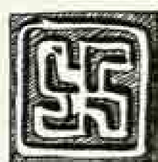

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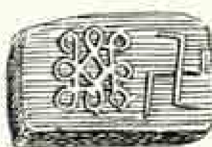

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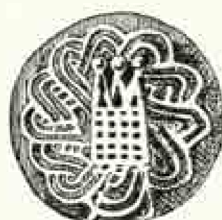

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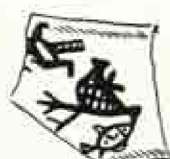
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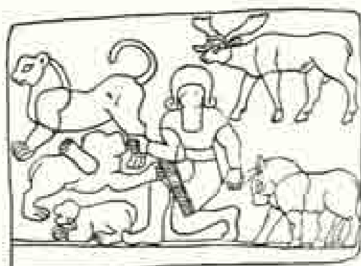
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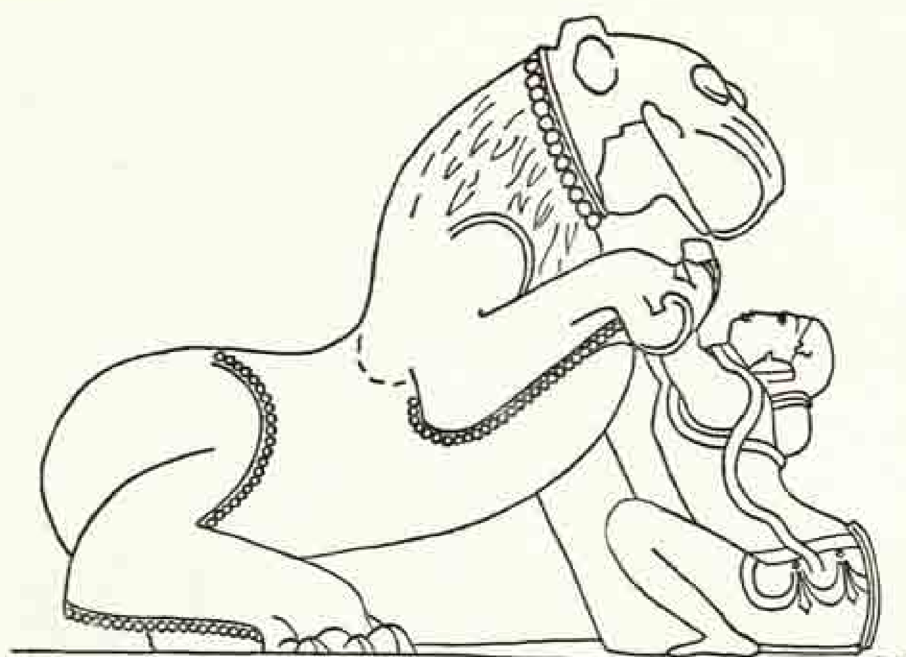


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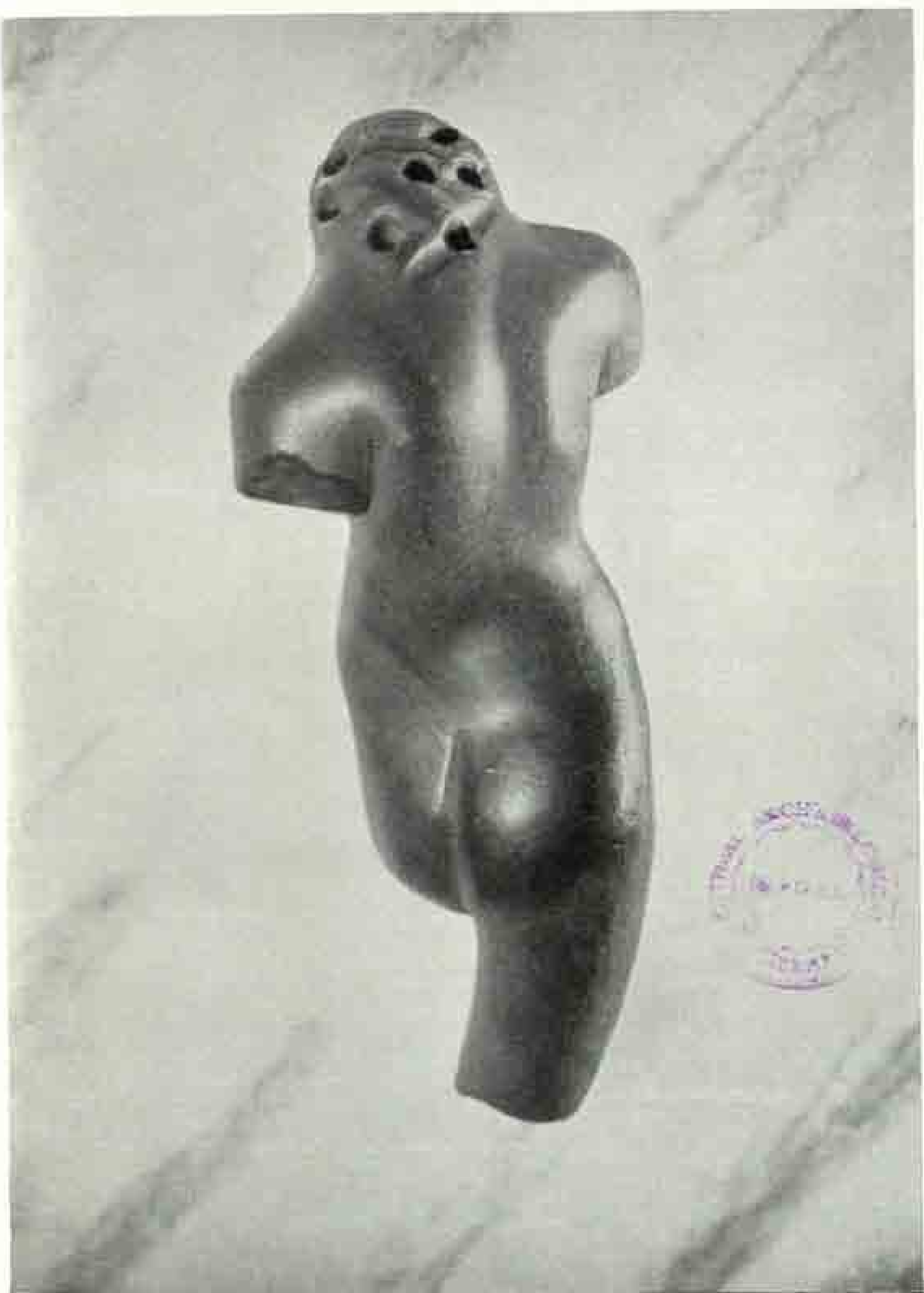
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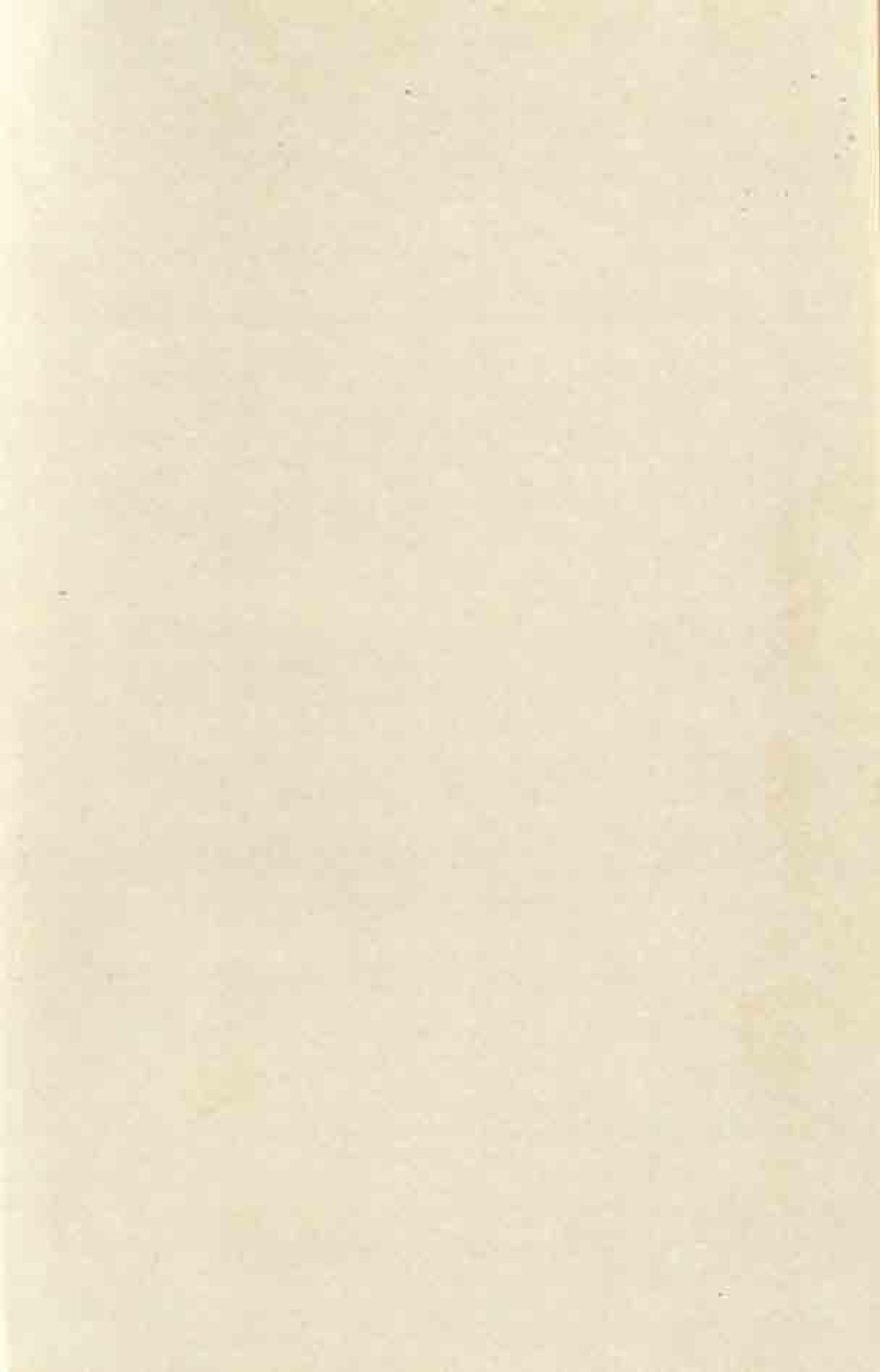

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Harappa - Culture
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